

LISTEN
LIGHT

THE LATEST NEWS FROM **WIDEX UK**

CONTINUOUS **IMPROVEMENT**

“Widex UK are developing a very personal customer service”



MANAGING DIRECTOR'S LETTER

Welcome to Listen Light's 'Continuous Improvement' issue. We've been researching everything from customer satisfaction in the UK to why Dex products are intuitive to use. You'll find global market research results carried out by Denmark and news from the rest of the Widex family, which is ever growing - the latest *addition* being Widex New Zealand. Plus, an introduction to more UK faces and a round up of the latest Widex UK news - we meet another member of the Widex UK team and report from this year's BSHAA Congress. On the Widex stand this year, exhibition delegates had the chance to win two tickets to the British Grand Prix - Scott Wroe from Professional Hearing Aid Services, was the lucky winner. Congratulations Scott.

Enjoy the issue,
Jon Billings
Managing director,
Widex UK

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NATURAL CLEAR SOUND

How well does Clear work in the real world? Widex conducted research to find out

Widex recently set out to discover

how Clear is perceived by customers and end users and also to pin point the advantages and disadvantages of the product. Research was conducted across the world, including in Canada, Australia, Spain, Portugal and Denmark. The analysis focused on three key focus areas: natural clear sound, localisation of sound and ease of use.

When questioned, 8.5 end-users out of 10 reported they find the overall sound quality of Clear hearing aids very good. One end-user participant said: "I am very happy with my Clear 440. I own and conduct my own business and interact with people on a daily basis. They are superior to any hearing device I have owned during the past six years. My hobby is playing my guitar at night. The strings and sounds come alive now with Clear 440." While a dispenser in Canada commented: "There is simply nothing negative to say about the sound quality in Clear. And it is true what we say: 'Once Widex, always Widex'."

On the topic of sound localisation, 9.5 dispensers find the overall InterEar features of Clear excellent. An end-user in Australia reported: "I only have a moderate hearing loss. However when I put my Clear 440 on for the day, it just changes my whole outlook on the very busy day's activities'. I can even hear little birds chirping, can hear the grass crackle under foot on a frosty morning." Meanwhile a

"There is simply nothing negative to say about the sound quality in Clear. And it is true what we say: Once Widex, always Widex"

dispenser in Canada said: "I have been in this industry for many years, and I have never before seen such a 'wow' effect from clients."

The research, which was a combination of face-to-face interviews and quantitative questionnaires, also found that 9.2 dispensers find the Clear products – Clear 440, TV-Dex and RC-Dex – are very easy to fit and match, with 8.3 end-users reporting they find Clear hearing aids very easy to use. "The RC-Dex is very user-friendly, adding a 'lock' button or feature would be nice, because when it is used as a key chain, it can change programmes when it is in a user's pocket," suggested one Canadian dispenser, while an Australian dispenser said: "The remote controls are a breeze to connect and program." ■



92%

of wearers are highly satisfied/satisfied with their Clear hearing aids

95%

would recommend Clear to a friend or family member

9.2/10

dispensers find the overall sound quality of Clear very good

81%

are very satisfied/satisfied with their Clear hearing aids when in a conversation

86%

are very satisfied/satisfied with localisation of sound

“WIDEX UK ARE DEVELOPING A VERY PERSONAL CUSTOMER SERVICE”

Following customer research, we’re taking your views on board and continually improving our service

Earlier this year Widex UK undertook a large market research survey with the objective “To understand how our customers perceive Widex UK and determine key areas for customer satisfaction”. Your views are important to us, and we’re always keen to improve our standards to meet your expectations whenever possible.

The research, conducted early spring 2011, confirmed that a high percentage of you have been doing business with Widex for many years, with responses ranging from “I’ve been fitting Widex since 1996,” through “I’ve been fitting Widex for over 20 years,” to “My father has always fitted Widex – he has been in the business for about 50 years.”

In reference to the transition to the subsidiary this time last year, you commented: “I feel respected by the new Widex staff – they have taken a keen interest. It has been better since the change,” and: “Widex UK seem to be developing a very personal customer service.”

We are keen to take your comments on board and have already started acting on your suggestions. Following the Widex Day training days earlier in the year you requested we “increase the number of training days”, and said: “The training day was good, but they should be more widespread across the country.” For this reason, we have just held six training afternoons around the UK – north, south, east and west. More training afternoons will follow and the Widex Days will be an annual event.

We are keen to make a commitment to you and your needs, and we believe this starts with communication and training. As you concluded in the survey: “[Widex UK are] making an effort to communicate more now with businesses like mine and training seems good,” and “I’m a lot happier and positive than I was before I attended a Widex Day.” Plus lastly, “[The Widex training day was] well organised and ‘did exactly what it said on the tin’. I would definitely recommend and attend again.” ●

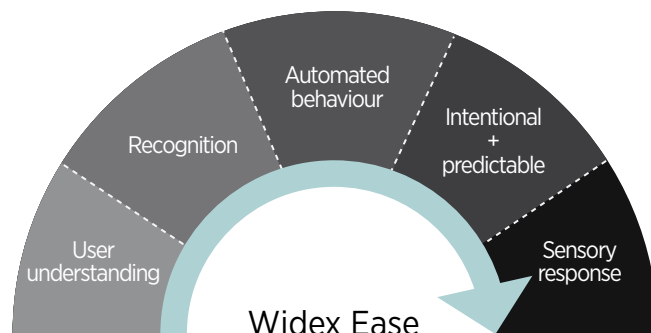
TOP TEN

THE BUSINESS AREAS THAT YOU SAID WERE **MOST IMPORTANT TO YOU:**

- 1 Sales representatives’ product knowledge
- 2 Helpdesk and customer service answer your queries in a timely manner
- 3 New orders are correct first time
- 4 New orders are delivered in a timely manner
- 5 Repairs are correct first time
- 6 Training for new products
- 7 Repairs are delivered in a timely manner
- 8 Helpdesk and customer service staff are knowledgeable
- 9 Sales representatives understand my business
- 10 Helpdesk and customer service staff speak my language

INTUITIVE DEX PRODUCTS

Widex introduce a new scientifically-based design concept to focus on user-friendliness



Today technology is an integral part of everyday life, and consumers have come to expect user-friendly product interfaces to help them overcome the increasing technological complexity. For hearing aid users, who rely on their hearing aids to lessen the impact of their hearing loss on their everyday life, it is essential that technological advances comprise a positive contribution rather than an obstacle in their lives. Widex are therefore introducing a new design concept, Widex Ease, which aims at optimising the user-friendliness of products.

Widex Ease is built on the principles of Cognitive Ergonomics – a scientific discipline concerned with the match between human cognitive abilities and the design and operation of the product with which the consumer will have everyday interaction.

This design concept has been implemented in Widex's series of assistive listening devices called Dex – TV-Dex, M-Dex and RC-Dex. The Dex have been designed as situation-specific rather than all-purpose devices, with the aim of ensuring that they are as straightforward and easy to use as possible.

The new listening devices react in a manner that is predictable and understandable to most hearing aid users. When the products have similar functionality as known technology, such as a mobile phone or remote control, the Dex

products resemble these in looks as well as functionality to allow the users to draw on previous experience.

To test the user-friendliness of the Dex in real life, a study with 23 hearing aid users with mild-severe hearing loss was carried out. Participants were fitted with Clear 440 – Passion or Fusion hearing aids matched with either an RC-Dex or an M-Dex. One half trialled the RC-Dex at home for an average of two weeks, the other half trialled the M-Dex. Participants were asked to rate the user-friendliness of the Dex device on a scale with the categories 'Very', 'Somewhat', 'Not very', 'Not at all', or 'Don't know' when they returned.

The results suggest that the Widex Ease design concept has succeeded in generating a high degree of user-friendliness. More than 80% of the users rated the Dex devices as being either 'Very' or 'Somewhat' easy to use.

The user-friendly product interfaces will benefit both clinicians and users. Clinicians will find it easier to familiarise themselves with new products and instruct themselves and instruct their users. The user will find it easier to embrace the Dex device, which may lead to increased usage and acceptance and ultimately greater benefit from the hearing aids. ■

WIDEX STARRED AT BSHAA



Widex were present at this year's BSHAA congress on May 13 and 14 with a new stand, new products and

our dedicated team on-hand to provide advice to congress attendees. The 2011 congress, held at the East Midlands Conference Centre in Nottingham, proved highly successful with nearly 250 delegates who also enjoyed a Popstars-themed fancy dress dinner. Team Widex, pictured, entered into the spirit of things going as one of The Beatles, Slash, Boy George, Ginger Spice, a Sergeant Pepper-era member of The Beatles and Adam Ant.

"We're thrilled that everyone was so happy," said BSHAA President Peter Ince. "After last year we didn't think we could improve but the one piece of delegate feedback was that we should have a central location, and that's what we had this year. All the speakers were brilliant too. From our perspective the main thing is to see our members having a good time, and it seems that's what they had." ■

NEW ZEALAND JOINS THE FAMILY

New Zealand becomes the latest country to join Widex as a daughter company

As of April 1 this year, Widex New Zealand is officially a subsidiary of Widex. New Zealand joins the likes of the UK, USA and Ireland who have all moved to being daughter companies in the past few years.

General manager of the company is Nigel Sallis, an audiologist who has worked with Widex New Zealand for the past five years.

Of his appointment, Nigel Sallis tells Listen Light: “Widex New Zealand was a small family-owned company of 14 people and I was involved in most aspects of the business, ranging from audiology, sales, marketing, production and ordering. I am actively in contact with clinicians on a daily basis and have built strong respectable relationships with all our customers. This experience and my knowledge of the New Zealand hearing aid market has provided me with the fundamentals necessary to take on the challenges of the general management at Widex New Zealand.”

Widex has long been an established brand in New Zealand, with its head office in Auckland. In the past it has run television campaigns to raise awareness of the Widex brand and supported clinics on a regional

level through joint print advertising. Now as a direct distributor for the parent company, there is ample opportunity to build on this strong foundation.

Nigel, who trained in the Masters of Audiology programme at Auckland University under the guidance of Grant Searchfield whose research focus is tinnitus management, says: “Becoming a daughter company of Widex allows us to access the extensive knowledge base and experience across all departments in Denmark. This transition has removed the inter-company barriers and opens opportunities for running new marketing campaigns and will ensure that Widex will retain its competitive edge for the end-user.”

Widex are thrilled with the new development. Vice President of Sales, Mike Dittman, welcomed New Zealand on board, saying: “They will now have better access to resources, specialists and know-how. We look forward to building an even stronger Widex New Zealand together.” ■

NEW ZEALAND: THE FACTS

Population:	4, 393, 500
Capital:	Wellington
Language:	English
Area:	268, 021 sq km
Head of state:	Queen
Head of government:	Prime Minister
Number of hearing aids sold per year:	50,000



TECHNICAL THINKING

Electronics Technician and Workshop Co-ordinator, Marlon Pearce is helping to get your orders to you correct and on time – he tells Listen Light about his role at Widex

One of the main challenges when Widex UK first opened its doors just over 12 months ago in Chester was that the new facilities were to not only house the managerial and administrative side of the business, but the production arm of the company, too. Along with such an operation came the logistics of workbenches, the warehouse, technicians and training. An experienced face that helped in this set-up was Electronics Technician and Workshop Co-ordinator Marlon Pearce, who transferred to Widex when the company took the decision to distribute direct to the UK market in July 2010.

Jamaican-born Marlon has a wealth of experience in the hearing healthcare industry, having previously worked for a company called Audio Medical Devices where he made and repaired hearing aids and all related instruments, before joining PC Werth in 2005. When the opportunity came last year to transfer from London to Chester to work at the new company Widex UK, Marlon decided to take a risk. “I made the move up with my family from London a year ago now and it was the right move for me,” says Marlon, who enjoys his job.

“My day is always productive and exciting. The average workday for me is busy and rewarding because I like what I do”

“My workday is always generally good,” he says. “I am one of the senior technicians who are trained in most areas of production – for example modelling, which is the Camisha (Computer-Aided Manufacturing of Individual Shells for Hearing Aids) area where we produce the shells for the ITE orders and the custom hard shells for BTEs, and the general service/repair and production of all aids – so my day is always productive and exciting. Part of my role is also supporting and training some of the technicians on the bench,” says Marlon. “The average workday for me is busy and rewarding because I like what I do.”

The Workshop Co-ordinator recognises that providing a good production service is very important as it provides a good level of business and customer satisfaction. He says: “We do this by giving the staff the correct training and updates on products and equipment, and also through follow-ups and checks on a day-to-day basis to ensure we are providing our customers with the correct product.”

In his time away from work, Marlon is a keen photographer and cyclist. “I really enjoy photography – I have two cameras, a Sony and a Nikon – and I also do a little cycling as I ride my bike to work sometimes – this area is great for cycling.” And once he and his bicycle get to Widex UK headquarters, Marlon’s keen to make an impression. “As Widex UK is a fairly new company my involvement in the business has been important. I have been involved in the development and footprint and flow of the workshop, plus the recruiting and training of some of the staff,” he says.

So what does the future have in store for this enthusiastic Electronic Technician? He smiles: “I’m looking forward to a bright and productive future with Widex and developing my role.” ●

ZEN STYLES

With six standard options, plus the ability to customise, the Zen styles have the potential to prove relaxing for a large number of hearing aid users

In the Widex Zen programme – a tool for relaxation, concentration and attention diversion for hearing aid wearers – the user has a choice of ‘musical tones’ called Zen styles. It is also possible to further individualise the six available styles – Aqua, Coral, Lavender, Green, Sand and Noise – by adjusting their tempo and pitch.

The music consists of sequences of tones with no lyrics to avoid strong emotions in the listener. “It can be boring to listen to repetitive signals. Fortunately,

fractal tones, by their nature, are non-repetitive,” says Widex audiologist consultant Dr Robert Sweetow.

Widex knew, however, the importance of offering several different Zen styles. “I think the real benefit of providing different Zen styles is that preferences can change over time, and the science of selecting the optimal fractal parameters is still being developed,” says Dr Robert. “So allowing patients to select their preferences on a daily basis can be useful.”

“The real benefit of providing different Zen styles is that preferences can change over time”

The volume can be adjusted in Compass or by using the volume control on the hearing aid. The Zen programme also includes a setting where the microphone sound is deactivated and only the Zen tones are played.

Kuk and Peeters (2008) investigated the Zen styles’ potential for helping hearing aid users concentrate and relax. Fourteen test subjects with mild to moderately severe hearing losses participated in the study. Subjects evaluated four Zen styles (Aqua, Coral, Lavender and Green). The majority of the subjects responded that all four Zen styles were either ‘Very relaxing’ or ‘Somewhat relaxing’, indicating that the Zen styles have the potential to function as a relaxing listening background for a large number of hearing aid users.

Moreover, after fine-tuning to individual preferences, 12 out of 14 subjects – 86% – found their favourite Zen style to be relaxing. This emphasises the importance of being able to adjust the volume and individualise the music to meet one’s own preferences.

Dr Robert Sweetow confirms: “It is important to offer choices in the Zen styles because individuals have specific preferences, particularly with regard to pitch and chords (for example, major versus minor). Our research has shown that while most individuals prefer slower pitches and major chords, there are a significant number of patients who prefer different musical structures.” ■

